

This information is provided to clarify the requirements for a fire watch. A fire watch is the action of an on-site person whose sole duty is to watch for the occurrence of fire.

Fire Watch Requirements

If a fire protection system fails, is out of service, demolition/additions to a building occur, there have been an excessive number of preventable activations or nuisance alarms, a building owner (or their representative) may be required by the Fire Department to provide a fire watch until the system is repaired. Personnel to conduct the fire watch are determined by the building owner. Note: A professional security company may not always be needed, but may be required by the Fire Department when life safety conditions warrant such action.

A fire watch is also required whenever fire protection systems are in trouble or in a supervisory mode for more than 8 hours. A nuisance alarm is defined as "any alarm caused by mechanical failure, malfunction, improper maintenance, or any alarm activation by a cause that cannot be determined." (1996 NFPA 72 1-4) Bellevue City Code 23.11.144 – Preventable Response to Fire Alarms – discusses preventable alarms, fees charged and owner responsibilities.

Owner Responsibilities

- a) Establish, instruct and maintain fire watch personnel.
- b) Notify the monitoring company.
- c) Notify the Bellevue Fire Marshal's Office that the system is not working and/or when the system has been repaired. (Call 425-452-6872 during normal business hours, and 911 during non-working hours)
- d) Contact a service company to repair the fire protection system(s).
- e) If a Notice of Violation has been written, contact the Fire Department when the system has been repaired. The phone number will be on the Notice of Violation.

Fire Watch Duties

Personnel serving as a fire watch have the following duties:

- a) Conduct periodic patrols of the entire facility as specified.
- b) Identify any fire, life or property hazards.
- c) Notify the Bellevue Fire Department if a fire is discovered by calling 9-1-1 with the exact address and type of emergency.
- d) Notify occupants of the facility of the need to evacuate. If the sirens or public address function of the alarm system are still functional, use them to assist with the evacuation.
- e) Determine at least one means of communication with the Fire Department. A telephone is acceptable.
- f) Maintain a log of the fire watch activities.
- g) Have knowledge of the location and use of fire protection equipment, such as fire extinguishers.
- h) Fire Watch Personnel can not have other duties besides their assigned fire watch. However, the Fire Department may designate other duties.

Note:

The fire watch will not perform fire-fighting duties beyond the scope of the ordinary citizen.

Frequency of Inspections

Fire watch personnel shall patrol the entire facility every 15 minutes in the following situations:

- a) The facility has people sleeping.
- b) The facility is an institutional occupancy.
- c) The facility is an occupied assembly occupancy.

Facilities that do not meet the requirements for a 15 minute patrol frequency should have a fire watch patrol every 30 minutes. If a facility can not be completely patrolled by a fire watch person in 15 or 30 minutes, extra personnel shall be assigned fire watch duties to assure that the complete facility is patrolled in the required time frame.

Record Keeping

A fire watch log shall be maintained at the facility. The log must be available to the Bellevue Fire Department at all times during the fire watch.

The log shall show the following:

- a) Address of the facility
- b) Times that the patrol has completed each tour of the facility.
- c) Name of the person conducting the fire watch.
- d) Record of the communication(s) to the Fire Department and monitoring company.
- e) Record of other information as directed by the Fire Department personnel.

Sample Fire Log

12345 Main Street

Time	Watch Person	Notes
1200	Jim Dough	Started Watch
1215	Jim Dough	
1230	John Smith	Maintenance arrived

Cancellation of Fire Watch

It is the owners' responsibility to cancel the fire watch once the fire protection system has been fully restored. Once the fire watch has been cancelled, the owner or representative must notify the monitoring company and the Bellevue Fire Marshal's Office.

For Additional information about fire protection systems or fire watch contact the Bellevue Fire Department at 425-452-6872.

References

- The International Fire Code Section 110 - Unsafe Buildings
- The International Fire Code 901.7 – Systems Out of Service
- The International Fire Code Chapter 14 – Fire Safety During Construction and Demolition
- Bellevue City Code 23.11.144 – Preventable Response to Fire Alarms